

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed April 21, 2004 claims 1-12 remain active in this application, of which claims 1 and 9 are independent. Based on the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the outstanding objections and rejections and they be withdrawn.

Examiner Interview

An Examiner interview was held June 9, 2004 between the Examiner and the Applicants' representative. Applicants' representative wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the interview. During the interview, the Yoshikawa *et al.* reference was discussed and an agreement was reached that Yoshikawa *et al.* does not disclose certain aspects of the invention and that the Yoshikawa *et al.* reference will be withdrawn by the Examiner.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

In the Office Action, claims 1-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 6,388,651 issued to Kinoshita, *et al.* ("Kinoshita") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,973,660 to Hashimoto ("Hashimoto"), further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,049,322 to Yoshikawa *et al.* ("Yoshikawa"). This rejection is respectfully traversed because, in view of the Examiner Interview, the Yoshikawa reference does not disclose or suggest certain aspects of the claimed invention and that the Yoshikawa reference will be withdrawn.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection over independent claims 1 and 9 and all claims depending therefrom, be withdrawn.


CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and places the application in clear condition for allowance or, in the alternative, in better form for appeal. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue.

Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, claims 1-12 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: June 16, 2004
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